

# GENDER EQUALITY:

## Promoting Equal Opportunity and Participation

The full and equal participation of women in the development of our societies is vital to the promotion of prosperity and democracy in our region. As a result, promoting gender equality and protecting the human rights of women in the Americas form a core element of the Summit of the Americas agenda.

At the Quebec City Summit, leaders agreed to integrate a gender perspective into national and international programs. Leaders also agreed to strengthen the government organizations that work for the advancement of women and to protect their human rights, and to promote participation by women in political life and decision-making. Leaders further acknowledged the role that women's organizations and the private sector have in advancing gender equality.



Michely Wada, center, attends an internal medicine course at Rio de Janeiro State University, Brazil, during the first semester of 2004. (Victor R. Caivano, AP/WWP)

To monitor progress in promoting gender equality and elevating the status of women in our region, leaders agreed to strengthen systems necessary for collecting, processing, and analyzing data. These steps will improve the way in which our governments implement public policy and monitor international agreements, such as the Quebec City Plan of Action, as we continue to strive for greater equality in the Americas.

The United States is committed to working toward greater gender equality domestically and internationally. In 2002, the U.S. was elected to the Executive Committee of the OAS Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM). U.S. development initiatives and programs and often include an explicit gender component. The U.S. will continue to work bilaterally and with international organizations to advance the cause of gender equality across the region.

### U.S. ACTIONS TO IMPLEMENT THE HEMISPHERE'S AGENDA

- The U.S. Government releases annual reports on **trafficking in persons** and is the major contributor to OAS programs to combat trafficking in persons.
- Numerous **U.S. exchange and international visitor programs** help women in the hemisphere further their contributions to their own countries, in areas such as leadership training, advocacy, networking, and campaigning skills. The U.S. also conducts workshops dealing with domestic violence and HIV/AIDS that address gender-specific issues.
- The U.S. Government and the non-profit Public Forum Institute sponsored the **Women Entrepreneurship in the 21st Century Summit** in March 2002.